



GRIEF SUPPORT AND CONNECTIONS FOR YOUR JOURNEY

The five steps towards healing

Every human being experiences loss at some point in life, yet some losses impact us more than others. While loss and the accompanying grief are part of our human journey, they can be disruptive and create an overwhelming sense of sadness, loneliness and fear. The reminders below can assist you through the grieving process.

STEP 1

Remember there is no right or wrong way to grieve. Some people outwardly express grief, while others are private. Some people want a lot of support and comfort while others need to grieve alone. Grief takes as long as it takes. There are no time limits on how long one “should” grieve. Each person’s sadness and re-orientation to life after loss is different. No one should tell someone else, “Get over it, you have been sad long enough.”

STEP 2

Grief “comes in waves and hides in pockets.” One moment a person may feel fine and happy, and the next moment they are overwhelmed by sadness and frustration at their loss. Unexpected waves of emotion may be confusing to those around a person who is grieving. They may start crying for no apparent reason. This is a normal part of the grieving process. The waves of sadness do get further apart and less intense over time, but for a long while they may seem to just appear.

STEP 3

The shortest way to the other side of grief is through it. A person who tries to suppress their sadness about a loss will eventually have to deal with the anger, sadness and unfairness of the loss. You can delay your grief, but you cannot avoid it. The more unresolved and suppressed grief is, the more a



person’s life will be emotionally restricted, and their grief will come out in unconscious ways at those around them. It is important to honor and acknowledge grief and loss and the accompanying feelings so these feelings are not slipping out at unwanted times at others, or turned inward and causing physical distress.

STEP 4

Spend time with long-time friends and relatives who care. Continuity in life is important. Being able to relive memories, reconnect with the past and have a sense that you are not all alone is important.

STEP 5

Take advantage of the support resources available through Coastal Hospice’s Grief Support Program. We offer memorial celebrations, support groups, socials, and special opportunities. Please check the calendar on page 4 for more information. These events are also on our website at www.coastalhospice.org.



The parable of the butterfly

Sitting on a park bench one sunny afternoon, a man eagerly watched as a Monarch butterfly struggled to surface from its encased cocoon. After great effort, the butterfly was successful in making a very small hole, but soon discovered that its body was too large to emerge through it. Having endured intense struggle, the butterfly appeared exhausted and void of strength.

Unable to sit idly by and watch this extreme effort at freedom, the man reached into his pocket and retrieved his pen knife. With great care, he took the cocoon in his hand and enlarged the hole, hoping to aid the butterfly in discovering its blissful release.

Yet, out of his kindness and eagerness to help, the man failed to understand the tight cocoon is the butterfly’s way of coating its wings with its own bodily fluid, enabling it to fly. The man discovered with increasing sorrow that he had not enhanced the butterfly’s freedom but rather, at his own hands, had hastened its death.

What we often deem as “suffering” is merely the process of moving from one existence to another. It may appear as “struggling” to us. However, if we attempt to invoke our will in this process for sake of our own solace and comfort, we abort the process of equipping and strengthening for eternal flight. It is often through the struggle of suffering that one is made strong.



A summer grief camp for kids ages 6 - 12 who have lost a loved one

Camp Safe Harbor is a safe, loving place for children to heal. This three-day summer day camp is filled with fun activities, help, hope, healing and love, and open to children ages 6 to 12 who reside on the Lower Shore.

The camp creates unique opportunities for each child to heal in his or her own way through play and fun activities. They'll join other children who have experienced a similar loss with opportunity to share their grief stories with each other.

The camp counselors are experienced in providing grief support, and include bereavement counselors, chaplains and social workers from Coastal Hospice, and students and staff from Salisbury University. The counselor-to-camper ratio is high and encourages, one-on-one interaction.

Location: Salisbury University Teacher Education & Technology Center on US Route 13, Salisbury

Opening Night Family Party: Monday, June 26, 6 p.m.

Camp Days: Tuesday thru Thursday, June 27 thru 29, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Family Closing Ceremony: A Time to Remember:

Thursday, June 29, 4 - 5 p.m.

The camp is limited to 30 children, so please reserve your spot by calling 410-742-8732 Ext. 619



Open communication is key to helping children cope with loss

The death of a family member or close family friend can be a traumatic experience for a child. Preschool children may be unable to comprehend the permanence of death, often expecting the loved one's return. Preteens and teenagers may withdraw and have trouble communicating their sorrow – and even anger – over the death. Parents and other adult family members may be so consumed by their own loss that they're not available to truly "be there" for the grieving child.

Long-term denial of the death by a child or avoidance of grief is unhealthy and can later surface in more severe problems.

Children will watch parents and other adults for guidance on how to cope. If a parent is able to grieve openly, express their sadness and talk lovingly about the deceased, the child will often do the same. Encouraging children to freely express their sadness and talk about their loss can be keys to a healthy recovery.

Following the death of a loved one, it is typical for children to move between moments of joyful carefree play and sadness. It's important, especially during this period, for surviving adults to take time to talk with the child and let them know that it's okay to express their feelings over the loss.

When the loss is a family member — particularly a parent or sibling — children will often react in anger. The anger may be revealed in boisterous play, nightmares, irritability or a variety of other behaviors. Often the child will show anger towards the surviving family members.

When a parent has died, often the child will revert to acting younger than they are. They may use "baby talk" and be demanding, especially for cuddling or attention. It's common for younger children to believe that they are the cause of what happens around



Grief counselor Bob Miller discusses feelings with a group at 2016's Camp Safe Harbor, a grief camp for children held every summer

them. A young child may believe a parent, grandparent, brother or sister died because he or she had once "wished" the person dead. The child feels guilty because the wish "came true."

Some danger signals to watch for:

- An extended period of depression in which the child loses interest in daily activities and events.
- Inability to sleep, loss of appetite, or prolonged fear of being alone.
- Acting much younger for an extended period.
- Excessively imitating the dead person.
- Repeated statements of wanting to join the dead person.
- Withdrawal from friends.
- Sharp drop in school performance or refusal to attend school.

MEET YOUR GRIEF SUPPORT COUNSELORS

Travers leads our

Howard F. Travers, Jr., a native of Salisbury, has been a chaplain at Coastal Hospice for 22 years where he has personally provided emotional and spiritual support and bereavement services to thousands of patients. He currently heads the hospice team of bereavement staff.

One of the most critical aspects of his work as a bereavement counselor is helping people deal with their loss by being present with them.

“For me, it is about honoring the spirit of the individual who has died by providing care to those they have loved - those now left behind,” Travers said. “In providing grief support to these individuals, it is walking alongside them on their journey, being present in their pain, learning from them, listening with the heart (even in silence when necessary), and respecting the disorder and confusion that often accompanies grief and loss. It is also bearing witness to their struggles and the ‘wilderness’ of their soul’s journey.

“That is hospice grief support. And that is my privileged role,” Travers continued.



*Howard Travers,
Bereavement Services Manager*

grief support team

Travers is an ordained minister, plus holds degrees in Broadcasting Education, Proficiency and Licensing from Columbia School of Broadcasting in Washington, D.C., and a Bachelor of Science in Practical Theology and Church Leadership from Southeastern University in Lakeland, Fl. His Master of Theology and Master of Divinity seminary degrees are from Southwestern Assemblies of God University in Waxahachie, Tx., and he has completed five units of Clinical Pastoral Education. He has also received certification as a hospice and palliative care chaplain from California State University.

Over the years, Travers has served as a pastor and chaplain in law enforcement, corrections, hospitals, and veterans agencies on the Lower Shore. He is founder and president of a nonprofit ministry to prisoners, ex-offenders, and their families in Salisbury. Travers also previously worked in Christian radio and television on the Delmarva Peninsula, co-hosting a daily drive-time radio program over 102.5 FM.

When you're ready...

Volunteering is a pathway to healing for veteran caregiver

George Shoban's wife, Carolyn, who suffered from Alzheimer's, was a patient of Coastal Hospice for more than four years, and George was her devoted caregiver. It was a difficult time for him, watching his partner of 33 years decline.

“I grieved while Carolyn was still alive,” he said. “Most of my grieving was done then. When she passed, the Coastal Hospice nurse was here. I just felt the comfort of having someone with me when she breathed her last breath.”

After Carolyn passed, George attended several of the Coastal Hospice grief support luncheons held regularly throughout the Lower Shore, but received a personal “message” to give back to hospice at his local drugstore in Ocean Pines.

“I was walking through Rite Aid one day, and there were two hospice volunteers sitting there at a folding table,” George said. “They asked me if I was a veteran, and if I wanted to get involved in Coastal Hospice's We Honor Veterans program. I thought that sounded interesting.

“Until then, I wasn't ready to commit myself to anything. Somehow that just came forward; it said, ‘You're ready. Here's your step. Go ahead and do it’.”

As part of the We Honor Veterans program, George visits veteran patients who come into hospice care, honoring them with a personalized certificate of recognition for their service and a patriotic blanket donated by the community. There's a bond that exists between the veteran volunteer and the patient.

“As I speak to these veterans, I tell them I was in the Air Force and you were in the Army, but it doesn't matter,” he said. “We both took the allegiance and swore to protect the Constitution, so it sort of makes us brothers. I give them something, and they give me something in return. We have a nice exchange. When I salute, no matter what condition they're in, they salute back. That's automatic. It's something we learned in the military.

“Volunteering is a good marriage really, for me.”



*Veteran George Shoban, 85, volunteers for the
We Honor Veterans program of Coastal Hospice*

Coastal Hospice is seeking volunteers to visit patients, honor veterans and assist with grief support. For more information, please contact Volunteer Services at 410-742-8732.



Coastal Hospice Inc.
 PO Box 1733
 Salisbury, MD 21802
 410-742-8732
 www.CoastalHospice.org

NONPROFIT
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 MAIL MOVERS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairman Michael P. Dunn
Vice-Chairman Stephen R. Farrow
Secretary Diana Barber
Treasurer Lorie L. Phillips
Member at Large Byron D. Braniff
Imm. Past Chair Glenna J. Heckathorn
President Alane K. Capen

Colleen "Cam" Bunting Ingrid A. Parker
 Roger L. Harrell Robert M. Purcell
 Madalaine L. How Anthony S. Sarbanes
 Barbara W. Jackson Michael E. Schrader
 Richard M. Laws Kathryn Washburn
 Barbara Long Dirk Widdowson, Esq.

Coastal Hospice Editor Elaine J. Bean



TO OPT OUT: You are likely receiving this publication following the death of a family member, friend or loved one who received care from Coastal Hospice. Grief support is a vital part of the hospice philosophy of care. This publication serves to share information you can use during this time and highlight upcoming events. If you do not wish to continue receiving this publication or have a change of address, please contact Melissa Dasher at 410-742-8732, ext. 621 or mdasher@coastalhospice.org.

UPCOMING GRIEF SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

Dorchester County

Evening Support Group – Dorchester County Library, 303 Gay St., Cambridge

All meetings on Tuesday at 6 p.m.:

May 2, May 9, June 6, June 13

Information ~ Elmer Davis 410-726-2583

Worcester County

Lunch Social Group – all at 1 p.m.

May 18 - Full Moon, 12702 Old Bridge Rd., West Ocean City

June 15 - Sunset Grille, 12933 Sunset Ave., West Ocean City

RSVP ~ Diana Pikulsky 410-641-6566

Support Group – Ocean Pines Library, 11107 Cathell Rd., Ocean Pines, Every Thursday at 11 am.
 Information ~ Bob Miller 410-251-8163

These groups provide a time of respite and a safe place to express feelings in the grieving process. We offer these activities at no cost to any adult who has experienced the death of a loved one, even if they were not a patient of Coastal Hospice. For information, call 410-742-8732.

Somerset County

Support Group – Somerset County Library, 100 Collins St., Crisfield

Every 1st and 3rd Tuesday at 11 a.m.

Information ~ Bob Miller 410-251-8163

Wicomico County

Lunch Social Group – all at 1 p.m.

May 10 - Adam's Taphouse Grille, 219 N. Fruitland Blvd., Fruitland

May 24 - Denny's, 100 East Cedar Lane, Fruitland

June 14 - Red Lobster, The Centre at Salisbury

June 28 - Outback Steakhouse, 8245 Dickerson Lane, Salisbury

RSVP ~ Lynette Chase 410-901-2292

Support Group – The MAC Center, 909 Progress Circle., Salisbury, Every 2nd and 4th Friday at 1 p.m.
 Information ~ Bob Miller 410-251-8163

NOTE: All lunch socials are "Dutch treat."